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YF Network

Growing Agriculture's Future

October 2009

Calendar

November 13

Collegiate Discussion Meet
⇒ Virginia State—Petersburg

Nov. 20 - 26

National Farm-City Week
⇒ www.farmcity.org

Nov. 29 - Dec. 1

VFB Convention & finals for
Young Farmers Contests
⇒ Richmond

Jan. 9-12, 2010

AFBF Annual Meeting and
national YF&R competition
⇒ Seattle, WA

Feb. 5-7, 2010

VFB YF Winter Expo
⇒ Westin Hotel in Alexandria
⇒ Tours in Wash. D.C.

Feb. 20 - 22, 2010

AFBF YF&R Conference
⇒ Tulsa, OK

Feb. 28, 2010

Contest nominations due

Join us on the new YF
networking site at
www.vafbyoungfarmers.com

Still receiving paper
newsletters? Find out what
your missing by sending an
e-mail requesting the
monthly newsletter online.

Contact us at
YoungFarmers@vafb.com

Mark Your Calendar Now for Winter Expo!

Winter Expo is Friday, Feb. 5th through Sunday, Feb. 7th and plans are underway to have one of the most fun and informative mid-winter events ever. The setting is Old Towne Alexandria and Washington D.C., but traffic won't be a problem with options we're considering for travel. The Westin Hotel is the backdrop and provides an awesome experience, while nationally renowned speakers from AFBF and other organizations will provide great tools and information to participants. Fun activities include a Wii reception and night lights tour of the monuments in D.C.

The tentative agenda has presentations by Jess Peterson from the US Cattlemen's Association, an animal welfare lobbyist who has worked with the pork industry—Steve Kopperud from Policy Directions, Inc, Gary Matteson from Farm Credit and more. Registration starts later next month, but don't wait to decide — make your plans now and join us for all the fun!



Your Vote + Your Advocacy = Making a Difference

The Young Farmers Legislative subcommittee recently challenged the state committee and now, all Young Farmers, to get out and vote in this important November election. "Not only state offices, but local ones can have an enormous impact on how or where you farm or do business, so Young Farmers need to step up and vote," said subcommittee chair Todd Ashton. For a list of candidates supported by the Virginia AgPAC, visit vafb.com, look under "Legislative Issues."

Advocates for Agriculture — by Trey Davis, VFB Governmental Relations

Please be sure to continue contacting your elected officials in response to action requests that are important to agriculture and Virginia. If you are not already a part of our online action system, Farm Bureau's Capitol Connection Action Center is on vafb.com, under "Legislative Issues."

To gain access, please e-mail me at trey.davis@vafb.com.



Farm Bureau is only as strong as our grassroots efforts, and all levels of politicians need to hear from the next generation of Farm Bureau leaders. Whether it's a budget, property rights, animal welfare, or environmental issue, you have an important role to play in current and future advocacy efforts for agriculture. Join in and make a difference today!

On Facebook? Check us out and become a fan

Keeping up with Young Farmers on Facebook helps show your support for the program and share great information, so come by and "fan" us by searching for VAFB Young Farmers.

Want more interaction? Log-in at vafbyoungfarmers.com to join our members network and raise your questions, post a blog, voice an opinion, add photos or connect with other Young Farmers.

New Collegiate Program Takes a New Twist

VFB Ambassador Cora Gnegy may not have expected to be so busy when she won the job last year, but she's taken her position seriously in promoting agriculture around the state. Despite traveling untold miles speaking and singing at county Farm Bureau annual meetings, Young Farmers events and District Women's meetings, she also just started a new Collegiate Young Farmers program in the Valley.

In early October, Cora and a group of ten Young Farmers from James Madison University and Blue Ridge Community College met to discuss how they could build a program that reaches across agriculture and related programs in their schools. They were unable to create a program at just one of the schools, so the meeting was held at the Rockingham Farm Bureau office, courtesy of county president, Robert Threewitts. The new group discussed bringing in two more schools, Eastern Mennonite and Bridgewater College to strengthen participation and outreach. The combined schools will make up the Valley Collegiate Young Farmers and allow enhanced interaction by students who are away from their home Farm Bureau, while also adding to the efforts of county Farm Bureaus in the Valley.



As a part of the state Young Farmers planning in 2006, the need to reach younger audiences in college and high school was seen as a top priority for growing Farm Bureau Young Farmers and the organization as a whole. Now, with collegiate programs at Ferrum College, Virginia State University, Virginia Tech and the new Valley Collegiate program there's sure to be more young people working with Farm Bureau, helping counties raise important agricultural issues, and promoting agriculture to the general public; a place where more support is always needed.

The Valley Collegiate Young Farmers have already started work on an Apple Butter Making event and building toward Farm-City Week this fall and National Ag Week in the spring. Yet another example, like the many new county programs over the past few years, where one person can make a difference. Especially, when you bring along friends, and work to better a great industry such as agriculture.

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If you're interested in joining the Valley Collegiate Young Farmers, visit them on Facebook or you can contact Cora at valleyyf@gmail.com.

Cooperative Extension "Listening Sessions" Taking Place Around the State—Speak out!

As a part of strategic planning processes, Virginia Cooperative Extension is listening to stakeholders in a series of meetings currently underway around the state. The meetings will culminate in development of a five-year plan that prioritizes goals and objectives for Extension. The listening sessions seek to:

- ◆ Define critical issues in your community related to economics, the environment, and quality of life.
- ◆ Identify the role Extension should play in responding to these issues.
- ◆ Seek your opinion in what Extension should continue doing, start doing, or stop doing.

Input will be collected and analyzed by a Steering Committee in 2010 as a part of drafting the plan.

You can have a direct impact. With approximately 22 meetings set, there's likely to be one near you. The future of services available to agriculture will be a part of the discussion and potentially on the line. To attend or learn more about local meetings, contact Extension or visit <http://www.ext.vt.edu/strategicplanning> now. The first sessions start October 26th.



Contact VFB Young Farmers at:
 P. O. Box 27552 Richmond, Virginia 23261
 Phone: 804-290-1032 Fax: 804-290-1099
YoungFarmers@vafb.com; www.vafb.com

You Vote — FFA Wins!

Campbell's Soup is running a contest that could help a Virginia farm family restore their barn, but raises a lot more than a barn in the process. The well-known soup company has promised the national FFA program one dollar (up to \$250,000) for each vote cast online from now through Jan. 5th, and they'll restore the barn that wins!



Shomo family farm in Staunton

So get online now and support one of the five candidates while helping FFA too. www.helpgrowyoursoup.com

Collegiate Corner



[College Aggies Online](http://CollegeAggiesOnline.com) is a joint venture of the [Animal Agriculture Alliance](http://AnimalAgricultureAlliance.com) and [American National CattleWomen, Inc.](http://AmericanNationalCattleWomen.com) that connects college students from across the country who are interested in promoting agriculture.

Note: CAO is not currently affiliated with our Young Farmers, but we thought it might be of interest to Collegiate YF's.

Collegiate Discussion Meet is Nov. 13th on the VSU campus w/ cash awards and a trip to the YF& R Conference on the line.